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### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

THE First Pan-Pacific Scientific Conference closed its three weeks session at Honolulu on August 20. Delegates were present from Australia, Canada, China, Japan, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa and from several scientific organizations and Federal Bureaus of the United States. The proceedings of the conference are to be published by the Bishop Museum under the direction of a committee consisting of Dr. Arthur L. Dean, president of the University of Hawaii, Dr. Herbert E. Gregory, Yale University, Dr. T. Wayland Vaughan, United States Geological Survey and Dr. Henry S. Washington, Geophysical Laboratory. This committee announces that the daily proceedings of the conference, including the discussions and the resolutions adopted, will be issued shortly and that the detailed programs of research in various branches of science will appear early in 1921.

DR. CHARLES MACFIE CAMPBELL, assistant director of the Henry Phipps Psychiatric Clinic, Johns Hopkins Hospital, has resigned to become professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and director of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. Dr. Campbell will assume his new work on October 1.

DR. OLIVER KAMM, of the chemistry department of the University of Illinois, has been appointed director of the Chemical Research Department of Parke, Davis & Co.

DR. C. D. SHERBAKOFF, hitherto truck pathologist at the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station, Gainesville, has accepted the position of station pathologist at the Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station, Knoxville.

### UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

DR. HARRY BEAL TORREY has resigned from the faculty of Reed College to become professor of zoology and director of fundamental education in medical science in the University of Oregon. He will divide his time between

Eugene and the School of Medicine in Portland. An attempt will be made to bring together in one course the premedical and medical years and to obliterate the divisions commonly existing between premedical, preclinical and clinical studies.

AT Tulane University the following appointments have been made: Dr. D. S. Elliott, head of the department of physics in the Georgia Institute of Technology, professor of physics; Dr. S. A. Mahood, chemist of the Forest Products Laboratory of the University of Wisconsin, associate professor of chemistry, and Dr. Herbert E. Buchanan, professor of mathematics in the University of Tennessee, professor of mathematics.

DR. LANE has been appointed clinical professor of dermatology in the Yale Medical School and Dr. Alfred G. Nadler has accepted a similar position. These two physicians will divide between them the work heretofore carried on by Dr. Ralph A. McDonnell, resigned.

DR. C. McLEAN FREASER has been appointed professor of zoology in the University of British Columbia, at Vancouver.

THE chair of chemistry in Berlin University, rendered vacant by the death of Emil Fischer, will be filled by Professor Fritz Haber, who will retain also his present position of director of the Emperor William Institute for Physical and Electro-Chemistry.

### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

#### MIRAGES?

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have frequently observed the phenomenon described by F. W. McNair in SCIENCE for August 27. Contrary to the assumption of Mr. McNair, however, it may be observed under any conditions of weather and temperature. I have seen it ahead many times while driving an automobile over concrete and tar-surfaced roads. There can be little doubt that it is a phenomenon of simple reflection and is therefore entirely independent of atmospheric conditions. Any compara-

tively rough surface seems to act as a polished mirror toward light striking it at a very small angle of incidence. The mirage on the plains, being a phenomenon of refraction, is of an entirely different nature.

H. H. PLATT

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: In his communication to the issue of August 27, Mr. F. W. McNair touches upon a matter which seems to me worthy of further consideration.

In the course of numerous trips about the country by automobile, I have had repeated occasion to note the sort of mirage mentioned, particularly on stretches of surfaced road. The phenomenon commonly takes the form of an apparent small pool of water, which appears suddenly a little way ahead, and disappears with equal suddenness.

In most cases the reflecting air-surface would appear to be only a few inches above the road: the effect is that of a shallow pool, and one involuntarily dodges the apparent depression. On one or two occasions, however, I have noted a reflecting surface high enough to cut off the wheels of a vehicle driven through the lower stratum of air.

It occurs to me that the condition suggested may serve in part to account for ideas of temporary disappearance, or dematerialization, of solid objects, and for occasional accounts of apparent hallucination.

This matter would seem to be interesting and important enough to warrant fuller discussion.

FREEMAN F. BURR

RATTLESNAKE ISLAND, past which Perry sailed his fleet to the battle of Lake Erie in 1813, lies two miles northwest of Put-in-Bay and occupies about eighteen degrees of the horizon.

On Sunday, July 18, at about one o'clock, while watching a thunderstorm approach over Rattlesnake, a second island was seen, somewhat higher than the real one and shifted to the westward approximately one third the apparent length of the island.

At first this was thought to be a mirage of Middle Sister which lies some miles to the

northwest. Two small islets, the Rattles, which lie off shore from the western end of Rattlesnake and which were projected to the left of the phantom island, indicated, however, that we were looking at an image of Rattlesnake.

The apparition was seen from a cottage three hundred yards to the southwest as well as from the laboratory cottage. It persisted for some time, possibly as long as fifteen minutes, disappearing just before the sheets of rain from the storm blotted out Rattlesnake entirely. The outline of the real island was at all times more distinct than that of the image, which was—or seemed to be—slightly behind it as well as above.

STEPHEN R. WILLIAMS

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#### FAMILY AND SUBFAMILY NAMES IN ZOOLOGY

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have read with much interest Oberholser's thirteen rules for family and subfamily names appearing in the issue of SCIENCE of August 13, 1920, which he says have the approval, in part at least, of thirteen named persons well known for their work in systematic zoology. If Dr. Oberholser had stopped with number 12 his rules would appear to be quite ideal.

Why rule 13? Two family or subfamily names having the same spelling are comparatively rare. They are for the most part going to be used by persons who know what the type genera are. It is quite inconceivable that there would ever be any real confusion because of identical spellings. If it is desirable to distinguish between two families or subfamilies that would be spelled alike by following rules 1 and 2, a prefixed *Pro* seems to me to be the least desirable method. Any one not familiar with the case would naturally think the type genus of *Propicidae* to be either *Propicus* or *Propica*. In Palmer's "Index Generum Mammalium" there are over 100 generic or subgeneric names beginning with the prefix *Pro* and at least half a dozen of these names are used in forming family or subfamily names.